

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 HA-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: CHILEAN NATIONAL CONSULTATION: SITUATION AS OF
DECEMBER 31

REF: SANTIAGO 10344

1. SUMMARY. THE NEW COMPTROLLER GENERAL TAKES OFFICE
JANUARY 2 AND IS EXPECTED TO APPROVE THE DECREE AUTHORIZING
THE JANUARY 4 VOTE. THE JUNTA REPORTEDLY APPROVED DECEMBER
29 A BUDGET EXPENDITURE OF 73 MILLION PESOS FOR THE EVENT.
CATHOLIC BISHOPS MET DECEMBER 30 AND ISSUED A STATEMENT
RECOMMENDING CANCELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT OF THE PLEBISCITE.
PINOCHEZ WILL DELIVER A BRIEF YEAR END ADDRESS TO THE
NATION THIS EVENING AND MAY INCLUDE A CALL FOR SUPPORT.
THREE ALLEGED MIRISTAS DIE. END SUMMARY.

2. NEW COMPTROLLER: SERGIO FERNANDEZ WILL TAKE OVER THE
FUNCTIONS OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL THE MORNING OF JANUARY 2.
AFTER HIS SWEARING-IN DECEMBER 30, FERNANDEZ SAID THAT HE
AND OUTGOING COMPTROLLER HUMERES WOULD REVIEW JOINTLY THE
CONTRALORIA'S LEGAL POSITION REGARDING THE DECREE AUTHOR-
IZING THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION. FERNANDEZ SAID THAT HE
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WOULD ASK THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT TO STUDY THE GOC'S REBUTTAL
BEFORE MAKING HIS DECISION. JUSTICE MINISTER MADARIAGA
SAID DECEMBER 30 THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT YET SENT ITS
COUNTER-BRIEF BACK TO THE CONTRALORIA. (COMMENT: IT
WAS NICE OF EX-LAVOR MINISTER FERNANDEZ TO SAY HE WOULD
FOLLOW ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE, BUT EVEN IF THE TIMING
GETS CLOSE, HIS APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECREE

APPEARS SURE.)

3. PLEBISCITE BUDGET. ADDING STRENGTH TO THE BELIEF THAT THE VOTE WILL PROCEED AS SCHEDULED IS A REPORT THAT THE JUNTA (ALL FOUR MEMBERS) APPROVED DECEMBER 29 A BUDGET APPROPRIATION OF 73 MILLION PESOS FOR THE "NATIONAL CONSULTATION."

4. THE CHURCH: DECEMBER 30 CATHOLIC BISHOPS ISSUED A BRIEF STATEMENT RECOMMENDING THAT THE CONSULTATION BE SUSPENDED OR POSTPONED. THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT RECEIVED SHORT SHRIFF IN MOST OF THE PRESS. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENT BY THE CHURCH REGARDING THE PLEBISCITE.)

5. PRESIDENT PINOCHET CONFIDENTLY LEFT SANTIAGO DECEMBER 30 FOR A BRIEF TRIP TO NORTHERN CHILE. HE WILL GIVE A 15 MINUTE YEAR END ADDRESS AT 2130 DECEMBER 31. (COMMENT: WE DO NOT EXPECT HIM TO BREAK ANY NEW GROUND.)

6. THE GOC CAMPAIGN ROOLS ALONG BUMPILY. A UNIVERSITY STUDENT MARCH THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 29 IN DOWNTOWN SANTIAGO MUST HAVE BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE GOC. ONLY A FEW THOUSAND STUDENTS TURNED OUT. THE GOVERNMENT GATHERED SEVERAL THOUSAND LABOR "LEADERS" IN DIEGO PORTALES DECEMBER 30 FOR A PEP TALK. ALL MEDIA ARE INUNDATED WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRO-GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS, MANY FROM LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS BUT OTHER UNATTRIBUTED, I.E., DIRECTLY PLACED BY THE GOC.

7. INTERNAL SECURITY NOTES: ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THREE SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT (MIR) BLEW THEMSELVES UP WHEN A BOMB WENT OFF PREMATURELY IN THEIR SAFEHOUSE IN LA SERENA, SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES NORTH OF SANTIAGO. A BOMB SQUAD WAS OBSERVED REMOVING A DEVICE NEAR PINOCHET'S SANTIAGO HOME THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 31.

8. COMMENT. WHILE LEIGH APPARENTLY REMAINS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE PLEBISCITE (SEPTOL), THE JUNTA APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET, IF TRUE, WOULD APPEAR TO REMOVE ALL REMAINING DOUBTS. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TOLD BY ONE WELL-PLACED SOURCE THAT FERNANDEZ IS PINOCHET'S MAN.
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